

REMARKS

The Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for thoroughly reviewing and considering the pending application. The Office Action dated October 6, 2005 has been received and carefully reviewed. Claims 1-3 have been amended. New claims 4-6 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-6 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention, as discussed in the Office Action. The Applicants have amended the claims as noted above and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Moreover, The Office Action rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by any one of U.S. Patent No. 3,039,285 to *Smith* (hereinafter “*Smith*”), U.S. Patent No. 4,489,455 to *Spendel* (hereinafter “*Spendel*”), U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0015082 to *Minayoshi et al.* (hereinafter “*Minayoshi*”) or JP 2001-178985 to *Minayoshi* (hereinafter “JP ‘985”). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As required in Chapter 2131 of the M.P.E.P., in order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. §102, “the reference must teach every element of the claim.” The Applicants respectfully submit that *Smith* does not teach every element recited in claims 1-3. Thus, *Smith* cannot anticipate these claims. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite a method of controlling a combination washer dryer which comprises, among other features, “simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the watering and rinsing steps, wherein the first drying step includes circulating warm air.” *Smith* does not disclose these features. The Office Action indicates that cols. 1-3 disclose all the features recited in claim 1. The Applicants have reviewed the cited portion, and nowhere does *Smith* disclose the operation

of simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the watering and rinsing steps. At most, *Smith* discloses that clothes are dried after washing, rinsing, and damp drying. *See e.g.*, col. 3, ll. 9-11. In addition, *Smith* does not disclose circulating warm air during the first drying step. Therefore, the Applicants submit that claims 1-3 are patentable over *Smith* and request that the rejection, as applied to *Smith*, be withdrawn.

Furthermore, claims 1-3 are patentable over *Spendel*. Particularly, *Spendel* does not disclose all the features recited in claim 1. Thus, *Spendel* cannot anticipate claims 1-3. For example, claim 1 recites a method of controlling a combination washer dryer comprising, among other features, “simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the watering and rinsing steps wherein the first drying step includes circulating warm air.” While *Spendel* generally relates to laundering textiles, *Spendel* does not disclose the aforementioned feature of simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step. Nor does *Spendel* disclose circulating warm air during the first drying step. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over *Spendel* and the Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection. Similarly, claims 2 and 3, which depend from claim 1, are also patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 1-3 are also patentable over *Minayoshi*. More specifically, claim 1 recites a method of controlling a combination washer dryer which includes, among other features, simultaneously performing a dewatering step and a first drying step after completion of the watering and rinsing steps, “wherein the first drying step includes circulating warm air.” *Minayoshi* does not disclose circulating warm air during a first drying step. More specifically, *Minayoshi* discloses that during a hydro-extraction process, a circulation path switching valve 13 remains closed. Furthermore, the valve 13 is not opened until a drying process, which occurs after the hydro-extraction process, begins. *See e.g.*, paragraph [0049]. As may be seen in Figure 1, air is circulated only when the valve 13 is open. Accordingly, since the valve 13 remains

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closed during the hydro-extraction process, warm air is not circulated. The Applicants submit that claim 1 is, as are claims 2 and 3 which depend therefrom, patentable over the cited reference and request that the rejection, as applied to *Minayoshi*, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3 are also patentable over JP '985. As discussed above, claims 1-3 are patentable over *Minayoshi*, which claims foreign priority to JP '985. Therefore, claims 1-3 are also patentable over JP '985 and the Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Applicants have also added new claims 4-6. The Applicants submit that these claims are also patentable over the cited references for the novel features recited therein.

The application is in a condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner believes a conversation with the Applicant's representative would facilitate the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: March 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By Valerie P. Hayes ^{Re. No.}
^{53,005}
for **Mark R. Kresloff**
Registration No.: 42,766
McKENNA LONG & ALDRIDGE LLP
1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 496-7500
Attorney for Applicant